



VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT



WW II. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

The Library of Congress and its American Folklife Center invite you to join us in an important national project--the Veterans History Project.

This project will honor our nation's war veterans and those who served in support of them. How? By creating a lasting legacy of recorded interviews and other documents chronicling veterans' and other citizens' wartime experiences and how those experiences affected their lives and America itself.

The U.S. Congress voted unanimously for legislation to create the Veterans History Project on October 27, 2000, through Public Law 106-380. Congress recognized the urgency of collecting wartime memories, which become more precious as the number of veterans dwindles by 1,500 every day. Congress also saw the value of engaging the American public in its own history.

Today's generation and future Americans have much to learn from those who served. A national collection of personal histories on audio and video tape as well as letters, diaries, maps, photographs and home movies will be of immeasurable value to historians, educators, students, authors, filmmakers, and family members.

The Veterans History Project encompasses veterans of World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars. By "veterans," we mean all veterans, men and women, those who served in war and in support of combat operations, all ranks in all branches of service -- the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. We also include the Merchant Marine, those involved in home front activities and citizens who supported the armed services. The first priority is to focus on the most senior veterans and those who served in support of them, especially those from World Wars I and II, and the Korean War.



1942. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



1965. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

The mission of the Veterans History Project at the library of Congress is to collect the memories, accounts, and documents of war veterans from World War I, World War II and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars, and to preserve these stories of experience and service for future generations.

GOALS

To stimulate the opportunities for public learning, by inviting, advising, and supporting individuals and groups to participate in the Veterans History Project.

To engage veterans, military, history, educational, and civic organizations as partners to identify, interview, and collect documents from war veterans and those who served in support of them.

To preserve and present the collected materials to the public, through the Library of Congress's exhibitions, publications, public programs, and Web site.

To identify veterans oral history programs and archives; to recognize and work with them to expand the Veterans History Project initiative.

To create a comprehensive, searchable, national catalog of all oral histories and documents collected as a result of this project.

We invite individuals and organizations to participate directly in the Veterans History Project and to help create a new national collection. You are encouraged to participate if you are a war veteran or served in the armed forces, if you served in wartime as a civilian, if you are a relative of a veteran, a teacher or student, a librarian or archivist, a historian or oral historian, a community member, a resident or visitor at a senior care facility, or a member of a civic organization or educational institution at any level.



1917. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

If you wish to join the effort, please check our Web site at <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/> or call our toll-free number at 1-888-371-5848.

All recordings of personal histories and all documents submitted to the Veterans History Project will be part of the Library of Congress/American Folklife Center National Veterans History Collection. They will be housed at the Library or at partner institutions, such as military museums, history centers, or local libraries and archives. The Library of Congress will create a comprehensive, searchable catalog of all materials collected as part of this project so that researchers and the public will know how to access them.

The Library's acclaimed Web site will present selections from some of the recorded histories, letters and other documents online, making them available to millions of Americans.



1945. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

"We can't all be heroes. Some of us have to stand on the curb and clap as they go by."

-Will Rogers

JOIN US!

We would like you to join us as a member of the Volunteer Corps, as a Partner, or as a Youth Partner. We need veterans and non-veterans, civic and cultural organizations, and schools and colleges to help in the effort.



1945. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

"I urge all Americans to participate in the Veterans History Project. Capturing stories of those who served in uniform in their own words will provide the inspiration future generations will need when it is their turn to defend the nation Abraham Lincoln once called the last best hope on earth."

**-Anthony J. Principi,
Secretary of Veterans
Affairs**

PARTNERS

The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress is inviting organizations to become official partners in this urgent and important effort. Partners may be: veterans associations, military organizations, libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, humanities councils, oral history programs, colleges and universities, and civic organizations. Partners may identify war veterans, recruit their members as volunteers, train them to conduct interviews and collect documents, lend equipment, or create veterans history archives close to home. If your organization wishes to become a partner, please contact us.

THE NATIONAL REGISTRY OF SERVICE

A major part of the project is the National Registry of Service. The American Folklife Center will develop a National Registry of those who are interviewed as part of the project. The Registry will be presented on the Library of Congress's Web site. It will include the individual's name, branch of service or wartime occupation, and the war(s) during which he or she served.

We need VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the pillars of this project. We invite you to join the Volunteer Corps.

Volunteers are the individuals who interview war veterans and transcribe their recordings, or identify documents to donate. Volunteers may be family members, fellow veterans, students, or other interested citizens who collect veterans' histories and donate them to the project.

The project needs fieldworkers and interviewers, including oral historians, folklorists, and military historians, both amateur and professional, who will work with our partner organizations or directly with us to record histories and train local organizations and volunteers.



COURTESY VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

A special call to veterans

If you are a war veteran, you possess a valuable resource in your war memories. Your military experience might make you a knowledgeable interviewer of other veterans. You and your fellow post or association members can join our Volunteer Corps and be interviewed, or interview senior war veterans and citizens in your community. You can work closely with your local library, historical society, college, or school to encourage their participation as a Partner in the Veterans History Project.

Join us as a PARTNER

Partners are a key component of the Veterans History Project.

A Partner can be a civic organization, veterans group, government agency, or an institution, such as a museum, library, community college, college, or university. You can assist the project by providing one of many necessary resources, including recruiting your members as volunteers; providing publicity, equipment, funds or interview training; or organizing education programs.

Partners can assist by developing public programs or events associated with the project. Partners also can set up publicly accessible local archives for those who wish to keep collections in their communities.

Enlist as a YOUTH PARTNER

The project's **Youth Partners include** classes of students and teachers in middle and secondary schools, afterschool programs, and youth groups and clubs who arrange to interview war veterans and record their histories as a group or class project, following our guidelines. Our Youth Partners teach and learn the techniques and educational value of oral history in the classroom or youth activity. This can add a powerful boost to history education, with young people learning history from those who lived it.



1950. COURTESY PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHIC DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

THE RECOGNITION LIST OF VETERANS HISTORY PROJECTS

There are many excellent veterans oral history projects throughout the country. This project seeks to identify and work with them. The Library of Congress, through the American Folklife Center, will present a Recognition List of Veterans History Projects, to recognize their activities and to allow participants to learn from similar projects being conducted at other organizations.

TELL ME MORE

While our focus is on audio and video recordings, we also welcome letters, diaries, and photographs that tell the veteran's or citizen's story. And we are also interested in maps, home movies, drawings, and other documents. The Veterans History Project is not collecting objects such as medals or uniforms.

One of the project's goals is to broaden public understanding of oral history, and to encourage direct participation in history by means of oral history. To do this, we will expand our Web site to provide oral history information sources as well as information about military history and notable veterans oral history collections.

GETTING STARTED

See our Web site www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/, or write us, for detailed-start-up information on recording a veteran's oral history or donating documents. Our Web site provides sample interview questions and technical tips to help interviewers be more effective in the interview and recording process. We also give you guidelines on what equipment you'll need--tape recorder or video camera, microphone and audio and video cassettes--and its use.

We invite you to use the interviewing and recording standards we provide, or you may wish to investigate the more detailed instructions used by professional oral historians in civilian and military archives, museums and libraries, to which we will refer you. Please use the forms provided on our Web site and duplicated in the instruction kit. These standards help to ensure the highest quality for the future preservation and use of the interview.

A message from James H. Billington, the Librarian of Congress:

"We owe our wartime veterans a profound appreciation for their sacrifice and service to our nation and its future. We also owe all our citizens an opportunity to appreciate and honor those men and women who have protected our nation in the gravest of times. Together, with the help of all Americans, we can honor our veterans and create a lasting body of documentary materials that will inform and educate our citizens in the decades ahead."

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library of Congress is the world's largest library and the national library of the United States. The library was founded in 1800, making it the oldest federal cultural institution in the nation. The mission of the Library of Congress is to make its vast holdings available and useful to Congress and the American people and to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and human creativity for future generations.

THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER

The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress was created in 1976 to document, preserve, and present all aspects of traditional culture and life in America. With more than two million items, it maintains the largest repository of traditional cultural documentation in the United States. The National Veterans History Collection preserved at the American Folklife Center will richly complement the Library's existing holdings on this subject of enduring importance.